

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5330
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOSOUTH
USCINCEUR
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SUBJECT: REACTION TO DECISION TO LIFT THE EMBARGO

REF: ATHENS 2824

1. REPERCUSSIONS GROWING OUT OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION
TO ASK CONGRESS TO REMOVE THE ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST TURKEY
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CONTINUES TO BE THE PRIMARY STORY IN THE GREEK PRESS, WHILE THE
GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS PLAY IT JUST
BEHIND REPORTS OF PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS' ONGOING TRIP TO WESTERN
EUROPE. (HE RETURNS FROM ROME, THE LAST STOP, TONIGHT).

2. IN ADDITION TO REPORTS OF CARAMANLIS' COMMENTS ON THE
ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION TO THE GREEK JOURNALISTS ACCOMPANYING HIM

(SEPTEL), THE PRIMARY ELEMENT IN MOST STORIES HAS BEEN CONGRESSIONAL REACTION TO THE ADMINISTRATION'S PROPOSAL. THE PRESS HIGHLIGHTED THE NEWS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY SENATORS EAGLETON AND SARBANES, AND CONGRESSMEN BRADEMAS, ROSENTHAL AND BIAGGI APRIL 5 AS WELL AS WASHINGTON DATEDLINED REPORTS SUGGESTING THAT THERE IS MAJOR CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO LIFTING THE EMBARGO. LIBERAL, OPPOSITION TO VIMA AND ITS SISTER LEFTIST OPPOSITION PAPER TA NEA HIGHLIGHTED A REPORT BY THEIR WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT EFSTATHIADIS TO THE EFFECT THAT CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED "PERPLEXITY" OVER THE GOG'S "SILENCE" SO FAR IN FAILING TO REACT PUBLICLY TO THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION.

3. PRO-GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS, IN ADDITION TO REPORTING THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS, HAVE EMPHASIZED AN INTERPRETATION OF THEM SUGGESTING THAT THE GOG HAS REGISTERED A STRONG PROTEST IN WASHINGTON, E.G., CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOVERNMENT AKROPOLIS HEADLINED "STRONG CARAMANLIS DEMARCHE TO WASHINGTON" (ALTHOUGH A SIMILAR REPORT WAS APPARENTLY DENIED YESTERDAY BY A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN).

4. REPORTS ORIGINATING IN NICOSIA ARE ALSO GIVEN CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION IN TODAY'S PRESS, INCLUDING STORIES SUGGESTING THAT THE TURKISH PROPOSALS ON CYPRUS WILL BE INADEQUATE. PRESIDENT KYPRIANOU'S STATEMENT CRITICIZING THE ADMINISTRATION'S DECISION WAS ALSO GIVEN WIDE PLAY IN GREEK NEWSPAPERS.

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5. RIGHT-WING, ANTI-GOVERNMENT ELEFTHEROS COSMOS ALONE RAN A STORY WHICH ALLEGED THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAD COMPLAINED, THROUGH AMBASSADOR MCCLOSKEY, TO ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER AVEROFF OVER WHAT THE PAPER CLAIMED WAS PRIME MINISTER CARMANLIS' REFUSAL TO MEET DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER FOLLOWING THE LATTER'S VISIT TO ANKARA. ELEFTHEROS COSMOS FURTHER REPORTS THAT THE AMBASSADOR TRAVELED TO BONN TO MEET THE DEPUTY SECRETARY. THE WHOLE STORY IS REPORTED UNDER PROMINENT FRONT PAGE HEADLINES, "MR CARAMANLIS REFUSED TO MEET MR CHRISTOPHER BEFORE THE LIFTING OF THE 'EMBARGO' -- WASHINGTON UNHAPPY AND EXPRESSED COMPLAINTS ABOUT IT."

6. INTERESTINGLY, NOW ALONE AMONG GREEK NEWSPAPERS, THE MOSCOW-ORIENTED COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE EXTERIOR'S RIZOSPASTIS DOES NOT CARRY THE EMBARGO STORY ABOVE THE FOLD ON THE FRONT PAGE. INSTEAD, IT CONTINUES TO RUN IT ON THE BACK PAGE IN A POSITION OF REDUCED PROMINENCE.

7. THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION SPONSORED BY THE UNION OF CYPRIOT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN GREECE (REFTEL) TOOK PLACE PEACEFULLY AT ATHENS UNIVERSITY THE EVENING OF APRIL 5. THE DEMONSTRATORS, NUMBERING A FEW HUNDRED, BROKE UP WITHOUT INCIDENT AFTER ADOPTING A RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE PROPOSED REPEAL OF THE

EMBARGO, RESPECTING THE GOC'S PROHIBITION OF THEIR MARCHING TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. A SMALL DELEGATION OF CYPRIOT STUDENTS CAME TO THE EMBASSY UNDER POLICE ESCORT AND PRESENTED A COPY OF THE RESOLUTION.

MCCLOSKEY

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